

Acts 2:22-36

Preaching the True Gospel

(The message that we bring to the world is centered in who Christ is and what He did.)

See also theology files #805, #511

Introduction

1. The early church had a message that changed the world in that it gave individuals an eternal hope and power to overcome the pain in this present life. What was that message? Are we preaching the same message today? You might be surprised to realize that there was a pattern of preaching in the early church that has been too often ignored in our day. What was that pattern? It immerses early in Acts.
2. This text is the first recorded sermon of the early church. What was its emphasis?
3. Context – Pentecost with the coming of the wind, fire, and speaking in several languages had stirred a crowd to wonder what was happening and what did it mean. Peter stands and begins to boldly preach. This is now a new Peter, not afraid, not confused, not misguided.

“22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-

A. **Jesus is the subject of Biblical preaching.**

1. **It is not about ethics it is about a person.** Proclamation started in response to a show of power but does not stay there. Actions or signs open an inquiring mind. The attention is quickly removed from the human experience and directed to the person of Jesus. We too often start and stay with the human experience and refer to Jesus as the instrumental agent in “our life changing experience.” While social ethics are important they are not the main issue. Jesus’ miracles of feeding and healing were designed primarily to highlight his authority not to solve social problems.

The World tends to reduce all religion to -

Jesus as **model**

Incarnation over crucifixion

Social ethics

Faith is defined by **faithfulness**

1st Commandment displaced by 2nd

- centering the Gospel message on social-ethical reform through psychological and political tools.

The Christian message is focused on a person -

Jesus is **atonement** and model

Incarnation leads to the **CROSS**

Jesus Christ

Faith producing faithfulness

1st Commandment is 1st and is linked to 2nd

- centering the Gospel message on personal redemption through faith in Christ (to a community of personal and social responsibility).

2. **It is a show and tell event.** We too often try to lead with our words. If we have no witness with our lives we have no witness with power.
3. **It is not our story it is Jesus' story** that is most important.
4. **The gospel story is grounded in history** not my experience, social reform, or personal ethical power.
5. **Examples:** Why should anyone listen to our story? Is there a danger in starting with personal experience?

23 this {Man}, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put {Him} to death. 24 And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

B. The Death & Resurrection are at the heart of his story.

1. **Who was responsible for the death of Jesus?**

Acts 2:22-23 “Men of Israel, listen to these words; Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know – this Man, delivered up by **the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men** and put him to death.”

Jn.10:18 “No one has taken it away from Me, but **I lay it down on My own initiative**, I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.”

Isaiah 53:5 “But He was pierced through for **our** transgressions, He was crushed for **our** iniquities; the chastening for **our** well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging **we** are healed.

2. **It is about the Cross and Resurrection not our spiritual experience.** The objective Death & Resurrection of Jesus is the point not our subjective

- It focuses on His death and resurrection not His ethics.
- It focuses on His identity as Lord not His role as servant to our wants and needs.

Conclusion

Saints: How do you tell the story? Do you create enough interest to gain a hearing? Does your story focus on you or Jesus? Is your attention on what Jesus can do for you and others or on who he is?

Seekers: Do you hear what Peter is saying? This man Jesus put an end to death by dying and raising from the grave. The issue is sin and death.

Skeptics: How do you explain the resurrection of Jesus? You can explain away the experience of his followers and the events of his life but what do you do with the resurrection?